

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-05

NSAE-00 PA-01 RSC-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 L-02 AGR-05

EB-04 DEAE-00 JUSE-00 SNM-02 SY-04 TRSE-00 NSC-05

OES-03 OMB-01 /068 W

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R 160539Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1517

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 8491

AMEMBASSIES PASS TO DEA

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, LA

SUBJ: LAO ATTITUDES TOWARDS UN ANTI-NARCOTICS PROGRAM

1. THE RECENT VISIT OF A UNFDAC TEAM TO LAOS HAS SURFACED SOME LAO ATTITUDES TOWARDS ANTI-NARCOTICS ACTIVITY WHICH WE CONSIDER INTERESTING. AS ADDRESSEES ARE AWARE, THE UN PROPOSAL WAS NOT ACCEPTED BY THE PGNU AND WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE UN HAS BEEN ASKED TO "REDEFINE THE PROJECT."

2. ALTHOUGH THE ATTITUDE OF THE PATHET LAO TOWARDS ANTI-NARCOTICS ACTIVITY IS FAR FROM CLEAR, WE BELIEVE THAT THEY ARE INFLUENCED BY A VARIETY OF MOTIVES.

A. THE PATHET LAO ARE KNOWN TO TAKE A VERY STRICT AND MORALISTIC VIEW OF THE USE OF OPIUM IN THEIR ZONE. ALTHOUGH SOME OPIUM PRODUCTION CONTINUES, IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT IT IS FOR TRADITIONAL CONSUMPTION, AND THAT IT MAY BE EXPORTED AS MEDICINAL COMMODITY TO

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NORTH VIETNAM.

B. SOME PATHET LAO LEADERS IN VIENTIANE, POSSIBLY MOTIVATED BY A GARBLED UNDERSTANDING OF THE TURKISH SITUATION, HAVE LET IT BE KNOWN THAT THEY CONSIDER OPIUM TO BE A CASH CROP WHICH LAOS SHOULD EXPORT. THESE INDIVIDUALS DO NOT UNDERSTAND CURRENT WORLDWIDE RESTRICTIONS ON COMMERCIAL TRANSACTIONS INVOLVING NARCOTICS.

C. THE PATHET LAO ARE GENERALLY OPPOSED TO MULTILATERAL ASSISTANCE AND ARE ACCUSTOMED TO BILATERAL AID.

2. ON THE VIENTIANE SIDE, THERE IS ALSO LITTLE ENTHUSIASM FOR THE UNFDAC PROJECT. MINISTERS NGON SANANIKONE AND SISOUK NA CHAMPASSAK HAVE BOTH TOLD THE AMBASSADOR THAT THE PROPOSED EXPENDITURE OF \$165,000 WOULD BE ENTIRELY USED TO PAY THE SALARIES OF UN EXPERTS AND TO PROVIDE THEM WITH HOUSING, TRANSPORTATION, ETC. THEY ARE SKEPTICAL REGARDING THE USEFULNESS TO LAOS OF SUCH A PROJECT AND CONCURRED IN THE CABINET DECISION TO REFER THE PROJECT TO THE MINISTRY OF ECONOMY AND PLAN FOR FURTHER STUDY.

3. WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN A COPY OF THE UNFDAC PROJECT WHICH APPEARS TO US TO BE VAGUE AND BADLY THOUGHTOUT. AS DRAFTED, THE PROJECT CALLS FOR A UN STUDY WHICH WOULD DETERMINE THE ROLE THE UN COULD PLAY IN CROP SUBSTITUTION, DETOXIFICATION AND NARCOTICS LEGISLATION. THESE ARE FIELDS IN WHICH LAOS IS ALREADY ENGAGED BILATERALLY WITH THE US AND WHILE WE WOULD WELCOME SKILLED UN PARTICIPATION IN ONE OR MORE OF THESE FIELDS, WE ARE NOT SURPRISED THAT THE LAO FIND THE PROPOSAL UNINTERESTING.

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